Class and Kinship in a Middle Western Community
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Source: *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Aug., 1949), pp. 469-475
Published by: American Sociological Association
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2087209
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SUMMARY

In emphasizing ritual as a significant index of family integration and conserver of family values, we run a certain risk of being misunderstood. Some cynical soul, in looking over our detailed material, may notice, for example, a ritual in which the entire family gather nightly to drink grape juice before retiring, and rush to interpret us to say: drink grape juice before going to bed and have a happy family life. Some of the criticism of the Burgess-Cortell study comes very close to being of this sort.

This, however, is far from the point which we wish to emphasize here. The evening drink and the grape juice are wholly incidental and trivial. What is significant is that the family gathers nightly, engages in a common experience, relaxes together, and exchanges comments before retiring. In thus participating in a recurrent event, which involves some degree of cooperation, the members of the family promote their common life and group rapport.

A separate study of domestic discord centering around differences in attitudes toward ritual, particularly between husband and wife, re-inforces still more the role which we have claimed for ritual in family integration. One final word of anticipatory defense. For every conclusion presented there is case material to support and illustrate it. But for virtually each of our findings, there are also contrary cases. Just as there are speculators who play the stock market on the theory of *Contrary Opinion*, i.e., bucking the majority trends, so there are persons and families who behave "the other way." We not only admit these cases, but we are trying also to understand them. The exception as well as the rule is grist for the mills of the scientists, and the Gods as well.

Basically what we have been trying to show is that ritualizing is a process of family interaction and culture transmission, and that its role depends upon its content and the manner of its utilization. A ritual, appealing in content and manipulated wisely, becomes a powerful and constructive weapon in the integration of a family; and an ill-adapted ritual or a good ritual misused may become an agent in its disintegration. This, perhaps, will serve to explain both our generalizations and the exceptions to them.

CLASS AND KINSHIP IN A MIDDLE WESTERN COMMUNITY*

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I

THE PROBLEM analyzed in this paper is part of a broader question that has been discussed by several sociologists in recent years, namely, the interdependence among different parts of American society. A dozen years ago Davis and Warner pointed out the need to study the connections between kinship and other parts of the social structure.[1] Warner and Lunt in 1941 stressed that there is a close connection between lineage and class position at the community level;[2] Merton, in the same year, discussed the question with special emphasis on the caste-class problem of Negro-White marriages in the nation.[3] More recently, Parsons has ex-

* Paper read at the annual meeting of the Eastern Sociological Society held in New York, April 23-24, 1949.

[1] Kingsley Davis and W. Lloyd Warner, "Structural Analysis of Kinship," *American Anthropologist*, 1937, 39: 291-313.

[2] W. Lloyd Warner and P. S. Lunt, *The Social Life of a Modern Community*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941, pp. 60-61, 92-104.

[3] Robert K. Merton, "Intermarriage and the

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plored a number of more theoretical questions on kinship in American society.[4] This paper, however, differs distinctly from the ones cited in that it measures association between the class and the kinship structures in a complete age-graded cross section of a community.

II

Brief statements of the techniques and criteria used to collect and classify the data for this paper are necessary before we turn to the analysis of the problem. In the first place, the study on which it is based included all adolescents of high school age residing, during the academic year 1941-1942, in the community I have called Elmtown.[5] Secondly, the families of these adolescents were placed into classes by the use of field techniques, which cannot, however, be described here due to spatial limitations.[6] Thirdly, information on kinship ties was accumulated systematically by personal interviews concerning every adolescent. The techniques[7] used in this phase of the study, and some of the problems encountered, I will give in some detail, for I have not discussed them elsewhere.

In the course of the interview, each adolescent was requested, first, to name every boy or girl in the community to whom he or she was related, and who was between 12 and 20 years of age. Second, each one was asked to tell us the type of the kin relationship. Age limits were placed on the first question, because we were more interested in cataloguing the kinship ties of each adolscent than in trying to trace out his kinship connections with individuals of all ages. We did trace all kinship ties in cases where the adolescent and his family were interested in the question and were willing to give time and thought to the problem. For example, one girl traced 24 affinal and consanguineal ties within the adolescent group. Later she and her mother spent four hours delineating the relationships between their immediate family and 219 other living persons in the community; this extended kin group represented five generations. Truly, this was a cooperative family. A contrast to this family was one in which ancestors in nine lines had been pioneers in Elmtown; the father had pioneers in six lines. He once stated, jokingly, "I am related to so many people around here, I often say to the wife every time a skunk crosses the pasture he probably looks up at the house and says, 'One of my seventh cousins lives there.' " But when we pressed him to list his many relatives he persistently refused. His son would name only blood relatives in his father's and mother's families who were actually in the study group. Moreover, he and his father steadfastly refused to recognize any persons connected to them by affinal ties as kin. This family was not unusual, for although Elmtowners follow the bilateral kinship system prevalent in our society, only a small percentage recognize affinal ties. Moreover, no precise definitions determine where consanguineous relationships end.[8]

Affinal ties which resulted from marriages between certain members of different families, but did not produce a consanguineous connection, were encountered frequently. In some cases, adolescents and their families recognized these ties, but in many more they ignored them or denied their existence. The refusal of many families to recognize affinal ties complicated the research; it also resulted in incomplete information.[9]

Social Structure," *Psychiatry*, August, 1941, 4: 371-374.

[4] Talcott Parsons, "The Kinship System of the Contemporary United States," *American Anthropologist*, Jan.-Mar., 1943, 45: 22-38.

[5] For a detailed discussion of this project see, A. B. Hollingshead, *Elmtown's Youth*, New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1949, pp. 3-45.

[6] The procedures used in the stratification of the families are given in detail in *Ibid.*, pp. 25-44.

[7] A general discussion of field procedures is presented in *Ibid.*, pp. 11-25.

[8] Our experience is in agreement with Lowie's observation that in our society definitions of kinship and kinship obligations are largely a matter of individual choice. See R. H. Lowie, *Social Organization*, New York: Rinehart & Co., 1948, p. 60.

[9] Affinal relationships that were traced fall into three types. What we call *Type A* resulted from marriages in the present generation, whereas *Type B* occurred in an earlier generation, and *Type C* was produced by remarriage of parents.

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Many vague, "shirt-tail," consanguineal ties were encountered, but where an adolescent or a parent could not trace the relationship, but "believed" there was a connection "some place in there," this belief was not recorded as a relationship. Then, too, it was clear that certain families tried to "forget" their kinship ties with certain other families. In these instances the "forgetter's" loss of memory became apparent when an individual who was related to the "forgetter" named him as a relative and stated the relationship. When this occurred, the "forgetter" was re-interviewed. In these cases, the "forgetter" usually explained that he was in a hurry or had "so many relatives that he couldn't remember them all," but he normally admitted the relationship, often in an embarrassed way. As a rule, adolescents and adults had lapses of memory concerning relatives who were either in a class lower than theirs or belonged to a notorious branch of the family.

Because of the complexity of the data on affinal relationships and our uncertainty as to their completeness and reliability, only consanguineous ties have been included in our analysis.[10] Furthermore, all sibling connections have been eliminated; to have counted them would not have told us what we wanted to learn, namely, the association, if any, between who married whom in an earlier generation and their consanguineal kin's position in the Elmtown social structure of today.

III

For analytical purposes two antithetical hypotheses have been formulated relative to association between the class and kinship structures. The first is: in a society such as ours where notions of romantic "love" are popularly believed to prevail, and the individual is supposed to be "free" to choose his or her marital partner, guided only by "love," we should expect to find—if this situation actually prevails—that the families to which the marital partners belong would be distributed indiscriminately throughout the social structure. The second is: in a stratified society, where socio-cultural factors other than or in addition to "love" limit marital choices, we should expect to find that marital partners would belong to families who occupy similar stations in the social structure. The first hypothesis may be viewed as a statement of popular folk beliefs regarding marriage. It assumes that in a "free society" nothing other than propinquity and "love" guide the marital partners

Type A may be illustrated as follows: Paul Stout did not have any blood relatives in the study, but his older sister, Martha, had married Jack Sweet's older brother, Charles. Clearly Paul Stout and Jack Sweet were not related consanguineously, even though a sibling of each had married a sibling of the other.

Type B, which involves two different generations, is of a similar order but of greater complexity. We shall illustrate it by the case of Helen Grant. Helen said that she was a first cousin of Jim Cate and Mary Burke; and Jim Cate was a first cousin of Arthur Miller, but she was not a cousin of Arthur. Upon questioning, Helen explained, "You see, it is this way. Mother's sister Alice married Uncle Fred Cate, and Uncle Fred's sister Freda married Henry Miller; that's Arthur's father. And another sister, Daisy (Miller), married John South. That makes the Millers and the Souths and the Cates all cousins. But I'm not related to the Millers and the Souths."

Type C affinal ties are more complicated than Type B. They are a product of broken homes and remarriages where children are involved. We shall use the case of Gunnar Nelson to illustrate this type. Gunnar was a junior in high school and his half-sister Hellwig was a senior. Hellwig was the youngest daughter of Nels Nelson by his first wife, and Gunnar was the eldest son by his second wife. When Gunnar was one year old his father, Nels, was killed accidentally. Gunnar's mother remarried and had a second family. As a result Olga Rasmusson, a freshman, was a half-sister of Gunnar, but she was no relation to Hellwig. Gunnar, in turn, was not related to Olga's three older half-siblings. Hellwig was a half-step-brother to the first family of Jarman Rasmusson, but neither Hellwig nor Olga were blood relatives. This family was complicated further by the fact that Nels Nelson's first family and Jarman Rasmusson's first family lived with blood relatives of their other parent. In addition, the young people refused to recognize their affinal relationships to one another.

[10] The cousin tie, ranging from first to fourth, was the most frequently encountered kind of kin connection; it was followed quantitatively by the intergenerational ties of uncle, aunt, nephew, and niece. Spatial limits preclude the analysis of the precise ways in which these young people were related to one another.

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in their choices. The second assumes that factors other than "love" not only guide the marital partners to each other, but actively limit the potentialities of who marry whom. If the first hypothesis is applicable to the Elmtown data there should be no significant relationship between the kinship and class

TABLE I. NUMBER OF ADOLESCENTS, NUMBER AND PER CENT WITH CONSANGUINEAL RELATIONSHIPS, AND THE MEAN NUMBER OF RELATIONSHIPS BY CLASS

(1) Class[1]	(2) No. of Adolescents	(4) No. with Blood Ties[2]	(4) % with Blood Ties	(5) Mean No. of Blood Ties[3]
I	4	3	75.0	2.00
II	31	16	51.6	2.44
III	158	108	58.4	3.28
IV	312	188	68.4	2.96
V	230	174	75.7	4.36
Total	735	489	66.5	3.76

[1] The classes are listed in descending order of their prestige positions, e.g., class I is highest, and class V is lowest in the rank order.

[2] $X^2 = 17.9603$ $p < .01$. This X^2 was derived by comparisons between the number with or without blood ties by class.

[3] The mean number of blood ties for each class was calculated only from the number of adolescents *with* blood ties; adolescents *without* blood ties were excluded.

structures. However, if the second hypothesis is applicable, we should find that kin and class are associated in a significant manner.

The law of the state where Elmtown is located prohibits marriage between immediate blood relatives.[11] This results in blood ties being established between more and more families as one generation succeeds another. Consequently, in a stable community such as Elmtown, where a considerable part of the population has resided for three or four generations, a sizable proportion of the inhabitants may be expected to be interrelated by blood ties. This was exactly what we found, for 489 of the 735 adolescents studied, or 66.5 per cent, were related consanguineously to one or more other adolescents. The smallest percentage of blood ties was found in class II (51.6 per cent), and the highest in class V (75.5 per cent), as a glance at Table I will show. The number of consanguineal ties between different adolescents in the several classes was significant statistically, but there was no consistent association between class position and the number of blood ties in each class. This may be seen from an examination of column (5) of Table I.

The percentage of individuals in each class who had blood relatives in the study and the number of relatives each had are functions, in the main, of fecundity and geographical stability. Classes I and V are the most stable ones in Elmtown, as measured by length of residence. But fecundity is markedly different in these classes. Normally only one or two, at most four, children are found in class I families; in class V, on the other hand, the mean number is 5.6, and families of from 10 to 13 children exist. Although these figures apply to the present generation, indirect evidence derived from kin ties indicates that this pattern has prevailed in these classes for at least three generations. The results of the differential operation of fecundity in these classes are the distinctly different figures on the mean number of relatives in each class given in column (5) of Table I. Since most people in each of these classes have been relatively permanent residents of the community since the Civil War, the percentage of adolescents in each class with relatives in the study is almost identical, 75.0 and 75.7. Mobility and fecundity are not reflected so clearly in the figures for the other classes.

The distribution of consanguineal ties within and between the five classes is the crucial test of the two hypotheses under review. The exact ways in which these relationships were divided by class position are shown in Table II.

Table II is designed to reveal both the concentration and the dispersion of kin ties by class position among the 489 adolescents who had one or more consanguineal relatives in

[11] Second cousins sometimes marry, but this is frowned upon by the local mores, even though it is sanctioned by state law.

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the study group. By reading across the rows a person can get the total number of blood ties that individuals in each class had with individuals in other classes.

The figures in the cells of the rows and columns opposite class I, class II, and class V bring out the salient fact that there are *no* kin ties between either of the first two classes and class V. Blood ties of class I persons reached as far as class III, and those of class II individuals into class IV, but not into class V. Conversely, class V young people had a few kinship ties (3 per cent) in class III, but none in classes I and II. Class III persons were unique in that they alone had kin ties which extended throughout the entire class structure. This leads me to remark that Kipling's famous lines about the cleavages between East and West are as applicable to the twain of the Elmtown social structure as to the two great cultural regions he epitomized.

Chi square was used to test the probability that the distribution of kin ties in Table II might be attributable to chance. The chi square which resulted from this analysis was far above the one per cent level of probability. This held true even when the data for class I were eliminated because of the small number of cases. This operation reduced the chi square by some 261 points; however, the figure for the distribution of kinship ties for the remainder was approximately 975—a figure that is far beyond normal expectancy at the one per cent level of probability. Thus, we may infer that factors other than chance have been operating in the marriage system of Elmtown to produce the asymmetrical distribution of kinship ties in Table II.

The coefficient of contingency was relied upon to measure the degree of association between the class position of an adolescent and that of the class positions of his consanguineal relatives. In view of the small number of cases in class I, two different coefficients were calculated. Since the coefficient of contingency was derived from chi square, the coefficient which was based upon the total chi square was larger than the one which was extracted from the smaller, more conservative one. Both, however, after they were corrected for broad grouping, in accordance with general usage, were very significant, as a glance at footnote 1 in Table II will show. Either coefficient is so high that it appears reasonably safe to conclude that who married whom in an earlier generation, as revealed by their descendants' present position in the Elmtown social structure, was not a matter of "love alone"; other factors which limited "love" choices to definite segments of the social structure were functioning in the society.

TABLE II. NUMBER OF CONSANGUINEAL RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN AND BETWEEN CLASSES (489 ADOLESCENTS)

Class of Adolescent	Class of Relatives				
	I	II	III	IV	V
I	1	4	1	0	0
II	4	8	17	10	0
III	1	17	184	132	20
IV	0	10	132	294	121
V	0	0	20	121	618
Total	6	39	354	557	759

$X^2 = 1235.6255$[1] $p < .01$ $C.65$[2] $\overline{C} = .73$[2]

[1] All cells in the table are included in this X^2 and the coefficients of contingency. But since 6 cells contain zeros, which raises the X^2 and the coefficients unduly, class I and its kin ties were eliminated and a second analysis was made. The resulting X^2, based on classes II through V, was 974.7672, $p < .01$; the coefficients were respectively $C = .60$; $\overline{C} = .71$. This X^2 and the attendant coefficients are still very significant, and of predictive validity.

[2] C = The coefficient of contingency. $\overline{C}$ = the *corrected* coefficient of contingency corrected for broad grouping by the formula given in Thomas C. McCormick, *Elementary Social Statistics*, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1941, p. 207.

These other factors, we have assumed, may be summarized under the concept of class and the sub-cultures which characterize each class.[12] It may be of interest in passing to note that class controls are operating in the adolescent generation, in the same way they did in the parental and earlier generations, to channel marital choices. Before the

[12] The cultural characteristics of each class are described in *Elmtown's Youth*, pp. 83-120.

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field work ended, 90 adolescents had married. In these cases the class position of each member of the marriage pair was known. Seventy-nine of these young people, or 87.8 per cent, belonged to the same class as their spouses.[13]

The distribution of blood ties within each class and between two or more classes is a consequence of three types of social actions: (1) intra-class marriage; (2) inter-class marriage; and (3) social mobility. No definitive answer can be given as to how much concentration of relatives in each class in the present is a product of intra-class marriage in the past. Neither is it possible to state to what extent inter-class marriages occurred, nor have we any way of calculating the amount of mobility. All we can do is to speculate, but in view of the concentration of blood ties within each class we believe it is safe to say that the present class structure of Elmtown is not a phenomenon of a few years' duration. Moreover, social mobility, either upward or downward, has been confined to a relatively small percentage of individuals in each class. In addition, this mobility has occurred with greater frequency in the upper than in the lower portions of the social structure. The highest percentage of mobility was found in class II. Several parents, through education, hard work, "good marriages," and some luck have been able, through their own efforts in business and the professions, to move from class III into class II. In the preceding generation, the parents of most of these persons had moved from class IV to class III positions. In this process, some relatives were left in the class from which the family moved. Then, too, a few ancestors had married across class lines. Another point about class II is the high degree of geographic mobility which characterizes it. In Table I, it may be noted that Class II had the smallest percentage of adolescents with relatives in the community, 51.6 per cent. The findings of this study on these points are in close agreement with those of Marcson.[14]

The percentage of interrelationships between classes may be viewed as a measure of social distance. From this perspective, class III is much closer to class IV than it is to class II, for only 5 per cent of the blood ties of class III were with class II, whereas 37 per cent were with class IV. Class III's kin ties with class V were almost as frequent as with class II, 5 per cent as against 6 per cent. Class IV had a bare majority of its blood ties, 53 per cent, within the class, as was true of class III, 52 per cent. However, the class IV's, unlike the class III's, were related in about equal proportions to the two adjacent classes—24 per cent in class III, and 22 per cent in class V. Thus, class IV, as measured by blood ties, was equidistant from each of its adjacent classes. Although class IV people are regarded in Elmtown as "respectable," only 2 per cent of the adolescents in this stratum could trace relationship with a class II adolescent and none with a class I. This means that for purposes of marriage there is an almost impassable gulf between class IV and classes I and II.

We may infer from Table II that the class V's were the most isolated socially, and the most inbred biologically of any segment of the population. Slightly more than four out of five of all class V's relatives were also in class V. Another inference we may make about class V is that individuals in it have not been upwardly mobile to any extent in past generations. Their generally low position in the prestige hierarchy, and their notorious reputations, have restricted their access to marriage mates to class equals in an exceptionally high percentage of all cases. This was crystal clear in the data on who had married whom in the study group, for 61 class V's out of 65 had married class V persons. Obviously, the present generation is continuing the process so characteristic of its ancestors.

From the data given in Tables I and II we may infer two other things about the Elmtown social system: *first*, marriage mates in earlier generations, in large part, belonged

[13] For further discussion of these marriages see *Ibid.*, pp. 432-435.

[14] Simon Marcson, "Intermarriage and the Theory of Assimilation," paper read at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Society, Chicago, December 28, 1948.

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to the same class; and *second*, the class structure has been relatively rigid for two or more generations. There are exceptions, to be sure, to these generalizations in each class, but they are rare in all classes. Even though some individuals married across class lines, and there has been some mobility, these two processes have not resulted in the dispersal of the descendants of such marriages throughout the class structure; consequently, the several branches of a family today tend to belong to the same or adjacent classes.

By way of interpretation and conclusion, I believe that the evidence leads us to the acceptance of the hypothesis that socio-cultural factors other than "love" limit marital choices, for the most part, to persons in the same class. These limiting factors are a continuation in the present of the ancient belief that kith should become kin. Although Elmtowners are verbally romantic, when they are faced with the problem of marriages in their own families they look at the potential marriage in more practical terms. On a number of different occasions, Elmtowners resorted to the folk rule that "it is better to marry over the midden than over the moor" to justify statements they had made that "equals should marry"; "it's better that way"; "the young people are happier"; "they won't have to fight their families."

The kith concept has been stated formally as the rule of homogamy, but no matter what it is called, it is an important factor in the operation and maintenance of the class system, because it integrates class status and kinship into a single functional entity. As it is applied in the different classes, similarities of such characteristics as occupation, income, wealth, education, religion, residence, family background, ethnic origins, reputation, and friends are emphasized in the selection of a marital partner. It is believed by many Elmtowners that these are "the things" a person should consider seriously in the selection of a mate, "rather than love." "Love is all right, but it doesn't pay the grocer or buy the baby's shoes." However, other Elmtowners will tell you that "love alone" is "the thing"; "it brings young people together." They will argue also that people marry when "Miss or Mr. Right comes along," not before. But in a very large number of cases "Miss" and "Mr. Right" belong to families of orientation who are members of the same class grouping in the community. If we include the immediately adjacent classes, then almost all cases are included. In short, the romantic complex operates, in large part, within the confines of the class system. In consequence, Elmtowners believe in the efficacy of "love" as a guide in the selection of marriage mates; simultaneously, they realize that class factors must also be considered.

The majority of parents are realistic in their view of the social system as it functions in relation to their children's marriages. Parents know that the socio-cultural traits diagnostic of class position are the things that "really count" in mate selection. Parents and elders pay lip service to "love" in the training of children for marriage, yet they have little faith in it as the essential guide to the maintenance of family welfare. In this culture where "getting some place in life," "progress," "success," "achievement" are stressed heavily, and prestige is measured by the possession of symbols which have positive and negative values assigned to them, each family guards its heritage as best it can in the area most vital to its continuation, namely, whom its children marry. A practical result is the effective implementation and perpetuation from generation to generation of the Elmtown class system. As this system operates in daily life, marriages are limited in significant proportions to persons from the same social level; reciprocally these marriages help maintain the system of stratification present in the community.

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